



3411-15-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to Re-establish the Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board Charter.

SUMMARY: The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), intends to re-establish the Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board (Board) charter. In accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), the Board is being re-established to continue obtaining advice and recommendations on a broad range of forest issues such as forest plan revisions or amendments, forest health including fire management and mountain pine beetle infestations, travel management, forest monitoring and evaluation, recreation fees, and site-specific projects having forest wide implications.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Scott Jacobson, Committee Coordinator, USDA, Black Hills National Forest, by telephone at 605-673-9216, by fax at 605-673-9208 or by email at sjjacobson@fs.fed.us.

Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Board is a non-scientific program advisory Board established by the Secretary of Agriculture in 2003 to provide advice and

counsel to the U. S. Forest Service, Black Hills National Forest, in the wake of increasingly severe and intense wild fires and mountain pine beetle epidemics.

The Board serves to meet the needs of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2005 (FLREA) as a Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RRAC) for the Black Hills of South Dakota and provides timely advice and recommendations to the regional forester through the forest supervisor regarding programmatic forest issues and project-level issues that have forest-wide implications for the Black Hills National Forest.

The Board meets approximately ten times a year, with one month being a field trip, held in August and focusing on both current issues and the educational value of seeing management strategies and outcomes on the ground. This Board has been established as a truly credible entity and a trusted voice on forest management issues and is doing often astonishing work in helping to develop informed consent for forest management.

For years, the demands made on the Black Hills National Forest have resulted in conflicts among interest groups resulting in both forest-wide and site-specific programs being delayed due to appeals and litigation. The Board provides a forum to resolve these issues to allow for the Black Hills National Forest to move forward in its management activities. The Board is believed to be one of the few groups with broad enough scope to address all of the issues and include all of the jurisdictional boundaries.

Significant Contributions

The Board's most significant accomplishments include:

1. A 2004 report on the Black Hills Fuels Reduction Plan, a priority following the major fires including the 86,000 acre Jasper Fire in 2000;

2. A 2004 initial Off-Highway Vehicle Travel Management Subcommittee report;
3. A report on their findings regarding the thesis, direction, and assumptions of Phase II of our Forest Plan produced in 2005;
4. The Invasive Species Subcommittee Report in 2005 covering recommendations to better stop invasive species from infiltrating the Forest;
5. A final Travel Management Subcommittee Report in 2006 in which the Board made 11 recommendations regarding characteristics of a designated motor vehicle trail system, the basis for our initial work to prepare our Motor Vehicle Use Map in 2010-2011;
6. The Mountain Pine Beetle Response Project in 2012 covering landscape scale treatments on portions of 248,000 acres of ponderosa pine stands at high risk for infestation.
7. The Board's annual work to attract funding through grants based on the Collaborative Landscape Forest Restoration Program (CFLRP), a program of the Secretary of Agriculture CFLR Program to encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes;
8. A letter to the Secretary and the Chief of the Forest Service to work, restore and maintain open space for wildlife habitat and recreation needs like snowmobile trails; and
9. The annual reports to the Secretary detailing the Board's activities, issues, and accomplishments.

The Board is deemed to be among the most effective public involvement strategies in the Forest Service and continues to lead by example for Federal, State, and local government agencies working to coordinate and cooperate in the Black Hills of South Dakota and Wyoming.

Background

Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the Secretary of Agriculture intends to reestablish the Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board charter. The Board provides advice and recommendations on a broad range of forest planning issues and, in accordance with FLREA, more specifically will provide advice and recommendations on Black Hills National Forest recreation fee issues (serving as the RRAC for the Black Hills National Forest). The Board membership consists of individuals representing commodity interests, amenity interests, and State and local government.

The Board has been determined to be in the public interest in connection with the duties and responsibilities of the Black Hills National Forest. National forest management requires improved coordination among the interests and governmental entities responsible for land management decisions and the public that the agency serves.

Advisory Committee Organization

The Board consists of 16 members that are representatives of the following interests (this membership is similar to the membership outlined by the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act for Resource Advisory Committees):

1. Economic development;
2. Developed outdoor recreation, off-highway vehicle users, or commercial recreation;
3. Energy and mineral development;

4. Timber products industry;
5. Permittee (grazing or other land use within the Black Hills area);
6. Nationally recognized environmental organizations;
7. Regionally or locally recognized environmental organizations;
8. Dispersed recreation;
9. Archeology or history;
10. Nationally or regionally recognized sportsmen's groups, such as anglers or hunters;
11. South Dakota State-elected offices;
12. Wyoming State-elected offices;
13. South Dakota or Wyoming county-or local-elected officials;
14. Tribal government elected or- appointed officials;
15. South Dakota State natural resource agency official; and
16. Wyoming State natural resource agency official.

The members of the Board will elect and determine the responsibilities of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson will act in the Chairperson's stead. The Forest Supervisor of the Black Hills National Forest serves as the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) under sections 10(e) and (f) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

The Committee will meet approximately nine times, and will attend at least one summer field tour as designated by the DFO. Members will serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for travel expenses while performing duties on behalf of the Board, subject to approval by the DFO.

Equal opportunity practices are followed in all appointments to the Board in accordance with USDA policies. To ensure that the recommendations of the Board have been taken into account the needs of diverse groups, served by the Black Hills National Forest, membership shall include, to the extent practicable, individuals with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women and persons with disabilities.

Dated: October 31, 2018.

Donald Bice,

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration.

[FR Doc. 2018-25060 Filed: 11/15/2018 8:45 am; Publication Date: 11/16/2018]